



March 16, 2015

Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
U.S. House of Representatives
18th District - Texas
2252 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Follow-up to the March 13, 2015 meeting on CES Environmental clean-up

Dear Congresswomen Sheila Jackson Lee:

Thank you for convening the March 13 meeting on the CES clean-up. I am writing to follow up with recommendations on behalf of the Texas Organizing Project (TOP).

We believe three things need to happen:

1. The CES site should be fully remediated to residential quality standards;
2. Ownership of the site should be secured by the City of Houston, the neighborhood should be involved in developing an appropriate future use and funds secured to redevelop the site; and
3. The city and federal government should cooperate to assess the environmental risks in residential neighborhoods of Houston and propose actions to prevent the future environmental catastrophes of this kind.

To achieve these objectives we ask for the following actions:

- A. Secure from EPA the CES site planning document setting out in detail the cleanup activities, schedule and costs to remediate the site to a degree suitable for residential use. This document should include an accounting of the funds and sources currently committed to the site clean-up.
- B. Request the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Center for Disease Control, Texas Department of State Health Services and the City of Houston and Harris County Health Departments to cooperate to collect health records and conduct a community health assessment of the persons living within 500 feet of the CES site and to make appropriate recommendations to address short and long-term community health exposure risks.
- C. Activate the existing MOU between EPA and Dr. Bullard at TSU to permit TSU to coordinate government response with the community by assessing exposure risks, implementing remediation

activities, planning for future use of the site and assessing similar environmental risks and developing solutions for other neighborhoods in Houston.

D. Secure through EPA "Tools for Schools" grants to mitigate the problems schools located adjacent and near the site are encountering.

E. Instruct EPA to determine if cleanup costs, fines or other actions can be levied against the CES bankruptcy estate in order to compel ownership of the property to be turned over to the City of Houston to control future use.

F. Seek funds from HUD and other agencies to further support site clean-up and redevelopment of the site for appropriate reuse as determined by a community participation process.

G. Secure a risk assessment and planning grant funded by EPA, HUD, TCEQ and/or the City to assess the present environmental risks in residential neighborhoods of Houston posed by incompatible industrial activities to and propose actions to prevent the future environmental catastrophes of this kind.

H. Ask the US Department of Justice and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to undertake a joint civil rights and fair housing investigation into the patterns and practices that have led to disproportionate exposure of citizens in Houston to hazardous environmental risk on the basis of race and national origin.

Last Friday, you asked TOP to assist by collecting information about health problems of residents of the area. We will do so and report back you at the next meeting.

We promised to share with you TOP's research documenting the widespread exposure of African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods in Houston to environmental hazards like those at the CES site. Attached is a map with that data. Our leaders, along with our advisor John Henneberger would welcome the opportunity to brief you or your staff on this data.

CES is a wakeup call to the risks that people of color face in Houston face from virtually unregulated hazardous land uses in their residential neighborhoods. We are grateful for your help and leadership. We pledge our efforts to cooperate with you to expose these risks and secure effective governmental action from our federal, state and city officials to put an end to these dangers.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. Please count on TOP to cooperate in finding solutions.

Sincerely,

Tarsha Jackson
Harris County Director
832-289-2370